

aromatic type hydrocarbons and less than 0.05% sulfur or sulfur compounds. The fuel is disclosed as reducing unwanted emissions and improving operational performance. The disclosure however does not address the issue of biodegradability. Still further, WO 97/14769 discloses diesel fuels having excellent lubricity, oxidative stability and high cetane number produced from the non-shifting Fischer-Tropsch process. Again no mention is made regarding biodegradability and the disclosure of oxidative stability would indicate against biodegradability.

Also on page 1 of the international application, please replace the final paragraph with the following:

Surprisingly, it has now been found, that a low aromatics content and a relatively high iso-paraffins to n-paraffins ratio contributes to ready biodegradability of middle distillates, such as diesel fuel.

On page 2 of the international application, please replace the first, second and third paragraphs with the following:

Thus, according to a first aspect of this invention, there is provided a biodegradable middle distillate cut, such as a diesel fuel, having an aromatics content of less than 9 mass%, as determined by the ASTM D 5186 or IP 391 test method.

The synthetic middle distillate cut may have less than 8.99 mass% monocyclic aromatics content.

The synthetic middle distillate cut may have less than 0.01 mass% polycyclic aromatics.

Also on page 2, please replace paragraph 6 with the following:

According to a second aspect of the invention, the synthetic middle distillate cut includes more than 50 mass% isoparaffins, wherein the isoparaffins consist predominantly of methyl and/or ethyl and/or propyl branched isoparaffins.

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On page 3 of the international application, please replace 2 and 3 with the following:

The isoparaffins to n-paraffins mass ratio of the C₁₀ to C₁₈ fraction having 20 mass% straight run component may be between 1.5:1 and 3.5:1.

The isoparaffins to n-paraffins mass ratio of the C₁₀ to C₁₈ fraction having 10 mass% straight run component may be between 2.3:1 and 4.3:1.

Also on page 3, please replace paragraph 7 with the following:

In a useful embodiment, at least 30% (mass) of the isoparaffins are mono-methyl branched.

On page 6 of the international application, please replace paragraph 5 with the following:

According to a fifth aspect of the invention, there is provided a biodegradable diesel fuel composition including from 10 mass% to 100 mass% of a middle distillate cut as described above.

On page 7 of the international application, please replace paragraphs 1-4 with the following:

The biodegradable diesel fuel composition may include from 0 to 90 mass% of another diesel fuel, such as conventional commercially available diesel fuel.

The biodegradable diesel fuel composition may include from 0 to 10 mass% additives.

The additives may include a lubricity improver.

The lubricity improver may comprise from 0 to 0.5 mass% of the composition, typically from 0.00001mass% to 0.05 mass% of the composition. In a particularly useful

embodiment, the lubricity improver comprises from 0.00 mass8% to 0.02 mass% of the composition.

On page 8 of the international application, please replace the final paragraph with the following:

The invention extends to an essentially non-polluting, readily biodegradable diesel fuel composition comprising of a mixture of normal paraffins (n-paraffins) and iso-paraffins in the typical diesel range from 160-370°C, having an iso-paraffin:n-paraffin mass ratio from about 2:1 to about 12:1, more typically from 2:1 to 6:1, and the iso-paraffins of the mixture contain greater than 30 mass%, based on the total mass of the iso-paraffins in the mixture, of mono-methyl species, with the balance consisting mainly of ethyl and/or dimethyl branched species. These iso-paraffins contained in a mixture with minor amounts of aromatics and other materials, contribute to a product from which readily biodegradable diesel fuels can be obtained.

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